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z, more adequately; and the visitor's notice may be directed to the new cases of Persian weapons; of altar utensils—crucifixes, reliquaries, pyxes, and the like; to the case of Japanese saki vessels; and to the objects of mediæval wrought metal work, which last are shown in one of the wall cases. Finally, his attention should be called to a number of German brass basins of the fifteenth century, with simple illustrations culled from the Bible and Christian legend, done with repoussé work, which combines a very definite charm of form, surface, color, and design. They have been lent to the Museum by Mr. J. Lindon Smith. On the north wall of this room have been hung the few pieces of embossed leather which belong to the Museum.

### Ceramic Room.

From an anonymous source the ceramic display has been enriched with several examples of the pottery lately discovered at Rakka, in the vilayet of Aleppo, a district along the western border of ancient Mesopotamia. The vases and fragments brought to light in the excavations are presumed to belong to a period extending from the days of Darius and Cambyzes to those of Mohammed and later, and consequently to illustrate the ceramic art of the Parthian and Sassanid periods wherein were evolved some of the rudimentary and pristine forms of the Persian art that flourished under the Ottoman empire.

Though the information as yet obtainable is still in the main highly conjectural, it may be said of the objects exhibited (Case 20) that the earliest is the small iridescent pitcher from Mr. Dikran Kelekian of New York; that to nearly the same period belong the flat iridescent plate, lent anonymously, the large whitish vase, the beautiful ovoid vase resembling in color certain Chinese celadons, and the mulberry purple iridescent pitcher close by; while the turquoise bowl with distinctly Persian ornaments in black, the fine-warped blue and white bowl, and most of the patterned fragments, would fall well within the period covered by the later Sassanid and the early Mohammed rules from the fifth to the tenth century of our era.

Thus is brought to light beneath those exquisite iridescent surfaces an unknown ceramic tradition to supply pregnant illustrations for one of the obscured passages of art history—the formation of the arts of Islam.

On the upper shelf of Case 20 may be found some playful fancies of the Ming potters. These clay fruits and flowers—a pair of brown persimmons as miniature vases, a lotus flower as a water dropper, a tiny, natural-looking gourd, the spotted blue plate and vase—reflect a mode of artistic feeling which gave way before the ostentation of the Manchurian dynasty and has never since reappeared in the art of China. As a further evidence of still earlier refinements may be pointed out the delicate white plates that are attributed, under the name of Sung, to that dynasty of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and which bear designs in a slight relief or incision of a character connected with Indian ornament.

Opposite, in Case 21, will be found nine large Chinese vases of periods anterior to the present dynasty—one showing the transparent green glaze and racy form of the Ming, one a gray-green celadon of the Sung with the apparent translucence and depth of certain crystals, and one, on a large scale, the splendid blue and white painting of a Ming brush earlier than the usual Wan-li, perhaps Chia-Ching (1522-66).

### The Japanese Room.

Especially important is the case of Sung and Ming mirrors from China, and of Kamakura and Ashikaga mirrors from Japan (case 27) lent by Mrs. Alpheus

Hardy. Aside from the rare appearance of such forms of bronze in America, there attaches to these mirrors the great value of clear artistic utterance. Such ornament has its kinship in all the great arts and therefore helps to do away with the sense of foreign inspiration, which hangs so heavily between many of us and the real character of Japanese and Chinese art.

### A French Tapestry.

A small French tapestry dating from the early sixteenth century—its period may be inferred from the transitional character of the architecture—has lately been acquired by purchase from the James Fund. It is exhibited on the main staircase.

Two scenes illustrating the efficacy of the Sacrament are set forth with a fervency of dramatic feeling and a naïve power of delineation altogether in accord with mediæval religious feeling. The scheme of color is a warm neutral with a predominance of light rosy red and cool blue, with passages of deep amber, harmonizing into a general tone of great charm. In the left-hand panel—for the picture is thus divided in two parts—is an altar placed in the room of some monastery, the courtyard of which is seen through a door in the background. A man possessed of an evil spirit has just received the host at the hands of a priest. He appears handcuffed and is bound and held by an attendant, who stands over him and brandishes what seems to be rather a birch rod for the correction of the sufferer than the holy water aspergillum for the exorcism of the demon.\* The demoniac kneels on the marble floor, and from his open mouth the source of his trouble, in the form of a reptile, passes upward through the air. Around are standing assistants, all intent on the marvel.

Beneath is inscribed:

"Par la vertu du sacrement  
Fut demonstre ung grant miracle  
Car le dyable visiblement  
Sortit hors dung demoniace."

(The power of the Sacrament was demonstrated by a great miracle, for the devil was seen to pass out of a man possessed.)

To the right is enacted a second miracle, the scene being laid in a flowery meadow beyond the walls of a city; the blue sky and the rich verdure proclaim that it is summer. A procession with acolytes bearing candles accompanies a priest—dressed, as in the first panel, in cassock, surplice, and stole—who bears the Sacrament, on his way back, no doubt, to the monastery whose church and buildings tower above the walls at the back of the picture. Facing the priest is a frightened rider whose horse has sunk to his knees. This is the pagan of the story, who by the action of his steed has been converted. The inscription in this case is as follows:

"Ung payen sans honneur passa  
Par devant le saint sacrement  
Mais son cheval se humilia  
Puis crut le payen fermement."

(A pagan passed before the Holy Sacrament without homage. His horse, however, abased itself; whereupon the pagan became a firm believer.)

The coat-of-arms beneath betoken the owner or dedicatory of this tapestry, which may well be one of a series of similar religious subjects.

\*The scourge seen in the "Flagellation of Christ" on the screen behind the Swiss chest in the Wood Carving Room is similarly represented. The ill-treatment of lunatics is a well-known feature of mediæval life and here receives pictorial illustration.